

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Chicago Rawhide Industries

Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence

Chicago Rawhide Earns "Seal" Of Approval

Client Profile:

Chicago Rawhide, part of the SKF Group, was founded in 1907. Located in Hobart, Oklahoma, Chicago Rawhide employs about 350 people. It produces engine and wheel axle seals for domestic auto manufacturers including Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors.

Situation:

Plant managers at Chicago Rawhide needed to boost efficiency. The company's efforts to meet ever-increasing customer demands over-taxed operations and were having a negative effect on the bottom line. While searching for the best way to meet objectives, the company turned to the Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence (The Alliance), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

Solution:

The Alliance coordinated a Lean 101 introductory course for many of the employees at Chicago Rawhide. The course helped convince plant management that a lean enterprise could enhance their productivity.

A division of employees engaged in a two-day value stream mapping workshop, documenting every step in every process of each line. By mapping the details of production, the company was able to identify areas for improvement. The Alliance then coordinated a pilot implementation project to make the targeted changes, utilizing Argent Global Services, a local consulting firm. The project, redesigning one of Chicago Rawhide's Chrysler product lines, showed remarkable improvements in information flow; developed a streamlined material flow; improved plant layout; reduced non-value added time; and reduced travel distance.

Results:

- Reduced cycle time by 65 percent.
- Reduced travel of materials by 82 percent.
- Reduced travel of people by 52 percent.
- Reduced information steps from 26 to 2.
- Reduced scheduling points from 7 to 1.
- Reduced work in program by 62 percent.
- Reduced space requirements by 35 percent.

Testimonial:

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"The goal of Value Stream Mapping is to put out more units with a more efficient cell. When the concept first came out, the employees' response was negative. But once they saw the investment they got to make in the process, they came around and after three or four months we had people anxiously waiting for their area to begin the process. They see production running so smooth and want to be a part of it."

Mark Denton, Process Engineer Manager